

EN
E-001922/2022
Answer given by Mr Breton
on behalf of the European Commission
(27.7.2022)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its detailed answers¹ to the European Court of Auditors' (ECA) Special Report 07/2022.

Information on Commission actions towards Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) internationalisation is available in a dedicated report² published in 2015, updated regularly since then (next update foreseen for 2023).

The Commission holds regular meetings with key networks (such as the European Business Organisations World Network) to update them on key EU industrial and SME policy initiatives and programmes. The Commission also organizes regular information sessions for Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) members³ to update them about the EU initiatives to support SMEs going abroad.

The Commission and European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) are also working with EEN members to assess how best to improve the network's visibility, as well as coordination with other internationalisation instruments at EU, national and regional levels.

Some projects provided value-added advice and support services to address gaps in the availability of services tailored to SMEs' needs. As these projects were not allowed to make profits, but needed expert input for their continuity, this impacted their financial sustainability.

In the new financing period, more continuity has been ensured for key advisory and support measures for SMEs such as EEN, Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs and the clusters by transforming them into multi-annual actions with a budget running up to 2024.

The multitude of EU financial instruments available during the previous financial period, have now been grouped under the Invest EU Programme. The main reason for this change was to make them efficient and flexible.

¹ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECARepplies/COM-Replies-SR-22-07/COM-Replies-SR-22-07_EN.pdf

² "Overview of EU instruments contributing to internationalisation of European Business", available at: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/industry/international-activities_en

³ <https://een.ec.europa.eu/>